United Nations A/54/PV.90

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

90th plenary meeting
Thursday, 2 March 2000, 5 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 5.20 p.m.

Floods in southern Africa

The President: Before turning to the items on our agenda this afternoon, may I, on behalf of the members of the Assembly and on my own behalf, extend to the Governments and the peoples of the southern African countries recently struck by disastrous floods — in particular, Mozambique — our deepest sympathy for the tragic loss of lives and extensive material damage.

May I also express the hope that the international community will demonstrate its usual solidarity by responding promptly and generously to any request from these countries for assistance in their present plight.

In the face of this massive tragedy, Mozambique will require many years of sustained assistance from external sources, in order to be able to rebuild infrastructure, schools, hospitals and houses.

Agenda item 125 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/54/730/Add.1)

The President: In the letter contained in document A/54/730/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/54/730, Afghanistan, Belize, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guyana, Honduras, Latvia, Mongolia, the Sudan and Uzbekistan have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Request for the inclusion of an additional item: note by the Secretary-General (A/54/237)

The President: The Secretary-General has the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fourth session of an additional item entitled, "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

Owing to the nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that it be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

Unless there is an objection, in view of the urgency of this request, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees that the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, could be waived.

00-32474 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of the current session an additional item entitled, "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the General Assembly, also on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(i) Appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

Note by the Secretary-General (A/54/109)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly, in its resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, decided to establish an Office of Internal Oversight Services under the authority of the Secretary-General, the head of which would be at the rank of Under-Secretary-General.

By this resolution, the Assembly further decided that the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services:

> should be an expert in the fields of accounting, auditing, financial analysis and investigations, management, law or public administration;
>
> should be appointed by the Secretary-General, following consultations with Member States, and approved by the General Assembly. For that purpose, the Secretary-General should appoint the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services with due regard for geographic rotation and in so doing should be guided by the provisions of paragraph 3 (e) of General Assembly resolution 46/232 of 2 March 1992 whereby the Assembly decided, in particular, that, as a general rule, no national of a Member State should succeed a national of that State in a senior post and there should be no monopoly on senior posts by nationals of any State or group of States;
>
> should serve for one fixed term of five years without possibility of renewal;
>
> might be removed by the Secretary-General only for cause and with the approval of the General Assembly.

In light of the provisions of resolution 48/218 B, the Secretary-General proposes to appoint Mr. Dileep Nair (Singapore) as Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services for one fixed term of five years, effective 24 April 2000.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve this appointment?

It was so decided.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs:

(c) Election of a member of the International Court of Justice

Memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/54/750)

List of nominations (A/54/751 and Add.1 and 2)

Curriculum vitae (A/54/752)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 70th meeting on 6 December 1999, the General Assembly decided to reopen consideration of this sub-item.

In accordance with resolution 1278 (1999) adopted by the Security Council on 30 November 1999, the General Assembly will proceed to the election of a member of the International Court of Justice for the

unexpired term of office of Judge Stephen Schwebel, whose resignation took effect on 29 February 2000.

In connection with this election, I should like to bring the following matters to the attention of the members of the General Assembly:

First, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 264 (III) of 8 October 1948, a State which is a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, but not a Member of the United Nations, shall participate in the General Assembly in electing the members of the Court in the same manner as the States Members of the United Nations. Therefore, on this occasion, the representative of Switzerland may participate in the election.

Secondly, I should like to confirm that, at this time, the Security Council, independently of the General Assembly, is also proceeding to elect one member of the Court. This procedure is in accordance with article 8 of the Statute of the Court, which provides that

> "The General Assembly and the Security Council shall proceed independently of one another to elect the members of the Court."

Accordingly, the results of the voting in the General Assembly will not be communicated to the Security Council until one candidate has obtained the required majority in the Assembly.

Thirdly, I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the documents relating to the election. The Assembly has before it document A/54/750, which contains a memorandum by the Secretary-General on the present composition of the Court and the procedure to be followed in the General Assembly and in the Security Council with regard to the election; document A/54/751, which contains the name of the candidate who has been nominated by national groups within the required time for submission, that is, by 7 February 2000; and addendums 1 and 2, which contain additional information regarding nominations received from national groups after 7 February; as well as document A/54/752, which contains the curriculum vitae of the candidate nominated by national groups.

In accordance with article 10, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Court, the candidate who obtains an absolute majority of votes in the General Assembly and in the Security Council shall be considered as elected.

The consistent practice of the United Nations has been to interpret the words "absolute majority" as meaning a majority of all electors whether or not they vote or are allowed to vote. The electors in the General Assembly are all 188 Member States, plus the one non-Member State which is a party to the Statute of the Court, namely Switzerland, for a total of 189 electors. Accordingly, for the present election, 95 votes constitute an absolute majority in the General Assembly.

The General Assembly will now proceed to a secret ballot. If in the first ballot no candidate obtains an absolute majority, it will be necessary to proceed to other ballots until a candidate has obtained the required majority. Pursuant to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 915th meeting, held on 16 November 1960, these ballots shall be unrestricted.

I should like to remind representatives that, pursuant to rule 88 of the Assembly's rules of procedure,

> "After the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting."

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to the procedures I have just outlined?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now begin the voting process. Ballot papers will now be distributed.

Representatives are requested to use only the ballot papers that are now being distributed, and to place a cross to the left of the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. Votes may be cast only for the candidate whose name appears on the ballot papers.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Dosari (Bahrain), Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana), and Ms. Smolcic (Uruguay) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 6 p.m. and resumed at 6.15 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	124
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	124
Abstentions:	7
Number of members voting:	117
Required absolute majority:	95
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Thomas Buergenthal (United States of America)	117

Mr. Thomas Buergenthal has obtained an absolute majority in the General Assembly.

I have communicated the result of the voting to the President of the Security Council.

I have received from the President of the Security Council the following letter dated 2 March 2000:

> "I have the honour to inform you that at the 4107th meeting of the Security Council, held on 2 March 2000, for the purpose of electing a member of the International Court of Justice for a term of office to expire on 5 February 2006, Mr. Thomas Buergenthal obtained an absolute majority of votes."

As a result of the independent voting in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, Mr. Thomas Buergenthal has obtained an absolute majority in both organs. He is therefore duly elected a member of the International Court of Justice, to serve for a term of office commencing on 2 March 2000 and ending on 5 February 2006. I take this opportunity to extend to him the congratulations of the Assembly on his election and to thank the tellers for their assistance.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 15.

Announcement

The President: I should like to draw the attention of members to my communication of 14 February 2000 transmitted to Permanent Representatives concerning the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs.

I should like to again recall that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999, which decided

> "to establish an open-ended informal consultative process in order to facilitate the annual review by the General Assembly, in an effective and constructive manner, of developments in ocean affairs"

and, in implementation of paragraph 3 (e) thereof and after the appropriate consultation with member States, I have decided to appoint Mr. Tuiloma Neroni Slade of Samoa and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as co-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.91

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

91st plenary meeting
Friday, 10 March 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Flood in Madagascar

The Acting President: Before turning to the item on our agenda this morning, may I, on behalf of the members of the Assembly and on my own behalf, extend to the Government and the people of Madagascar, recently struck by the flooding from cyclone Gloria, our deepest sympathy for the tragic loss of life and the extensive material damage.

May I also express the hope that the international community will demonstrate its solidarity by responding promptly and generously to any request from Madagascar for assistance in its present plight.

Agenda item 125 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/730/Add.2)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/54/730/Add.2, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/54/730 and addendum 1, Nicaragua has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should also like to inform members that since the issuance this morning of document A/54/730/Add.2, the Marshall Islands has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This information will be reflected in an addendum to document A/54/730, to be issued.

Agenda item 20 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/54/L.79)

00-33917 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.79.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt): It was with great sorrow that we received the news of the catastrophic floods in Mozambique and of the human tragedy that followed. In this regard, we would like to express our sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Mozambique.

In this context, on behalf of all African countries Members of the United Nations, and in solidarity with the people and the Government of Mozambique following the devastating floods that country faced, allow me to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.79 to the General Assembly for consideration and adoption.

Before doing so, I shall read out the names of a number of Member States that have joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

I understand that a number of other States will also join the list of sponsors.

The principal message of the draft resolution is to call upon all the States Members of the United Nations, as well as multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system, to respond urgently and to continue to provide relief assistance to Mozambique in order to help the country in its efforts for rehabilitation and reconstruction following this unfortunate natural disaster. The preambular part of the draft resolution expresses concern about the loss of human lives and the extent of the destruction, and takes note of the appeal launched by the Government of Mozambique for emergency humanitarian aid.

The operative part of the draft resolution urges all international entities to provide emergency relief in order to mitigate the disastrous effects of this natural disaster. Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue mobilizing and coordinating assistance for the required reconstruction of the infrastructure in Mozambique.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our condolences and solidarity to the Government of Madagascar, which has been subjected to a disaster of almost the same magnitude.

Mr. Manele (Solomon Islands): I have the honour to make this statement on agenda item 20, sub-item (b), on behalf of the States members of the Pacific Islands Forum represented at the United Nations in New York: Australia, the Republic of the Fiji Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Independent State of Western Samoa, the Kingdom of Tonga, the Republic of Vanuatu and my own country, Solomon Islands.

We wish to convey our deepest sympathy to the countries of southern Africa, in particular to the Government and the people of the Republic of Mozambique, for the recent floods that have destroyed lives and caused extensive material damage. I should also like to take this opportunity to convey our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Madagascar.

The world was still recovering from the recent shocks caused by massive catastrophes in Turkey, Greece, China, Venezuela, India and Viet Nam when another devastating natural disaster struck. The devastating floods in Mozambique continue to confirm the increasing incidence and magnitude of natural disasters. It is estimated that natural disasters have killed more than 100,000 people over the past two years. Millions have lost their homes and livelihoods. Most of the victims are from developing countries.

Several small island developing States in our subregion are among those which have suffered from nature's wrath during the past two years. As a subregion that is prone and extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, and given our experience of human suffering resulting from the unavoidable destructive forces of nature, we sincerely join others in expressing our support for and solidarity with the Government and the people of

Mozambique in their efforts to cope with the serious consequences of the disaster.

We join the Secretary-General's appeal for international assistance for Mozambique. A number of countries in our region have already responded. The Government of Australia, for example, is providing 1.5 million Australian dollars to help the victims of the floods in Mozambique. This funding will be used to support rescue and food distribution operations, as well as to assist local communities rebuild their lives once the floods have subsided. Australia is also providing a further 250,000 Australian dollars to Zimbabwe and South Africa, which are also experiencing serious flooding. The Government of New Zealand is contributing approximately 500,000 New Zealand dollars through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for emergency relief supplies, and through the United Nations Children's Fund for replacement educational materials, and it is making a further contribution to the United Nations accelerated demining programme.

Contributions, including emergency humanitarian relief provided by Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, will bring comfort to a part of Africa that is desperately struggling to create economic opportunities for its people. Urgent needs and concerns include shelter, food, clothing, safe drinking water and the prevention of the outbreak of diseases. Mozambique will continue to need concerted international support as it begins its rehabilitation and reconstruction. The United Nations has demonstrated its comparative advantage in soliciting international attention and mobilizing a concerted and timely response to such situations.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that efficient coordination at all levels is vital for disaster preparedness and emergency response. Information-sharing and early warning systems are essential elements for mitigating the impact of natural disasters. International cooperation to build disaster-preparedness capacity in developing countries, particularly in the most vulnerable, is critical. Above all, the increasing incidence of natural disasters demands a ready pool of resources, including financial resources that can be deployed and utilized immediately, thus minimizing human suffering. All these aspects are highlighted in resolution 54/233, entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters from relief to development", which the General Assembly adopted last year. Our countries collectively endorsed that resolution, and in the same spirit support the consensus adoption of the draft resolution on Mozambique contained in document A/54/L.79.

Mrs. Gittens-Joseph (Trinidad and Tobago): I wish to express the solidarity of the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group with the Government and people of Mozambique due to the tragic loss of human lives and extensive destruction of property and infrastructure caused by the unprecedented floods which recently afflicted the country.

As an expression of support to Mozambique at this difficult time, the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group agreed as a group to co-sponsor draft resolution A/54/L.79, entitled "Assistance to Mozambique following the devastating floods".

Many of the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region, having suffered natural disasters themselves, know first-hand the devastating effects of these events, such as the adverse impact on the economic and social development efforts, infrastructure, health, food security and general welfare of the population.

We would have seen on the mass media images of the thousands who were stranded for days in trees and on rooftops in the affected areas of Mozambique. It is reported that nearly 2 million persons have been affected by the floods, with hundreds of persons killed and the official death-toll still rising. An estimated 250,000 persons are crowded into enormous makeshift camps and about 100 tons of food need to be moved every day to feed these victims.

This natural disaster will undoubtedly pose a major setback to the economy of Mozambique, with the additional threat of disease. The dredging of minefields as the flood recedes will complicate mine-clearing efforts and the shifting explosives pose a threat to the public.

The States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group fully support the appeal made by both the President of the Republic of Mozambique and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the international community for assistance to Mozambique in dealing with this crisis. It is imperative that Member States, specialized agencies and relevant bodies of the United Nations, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations respond urgently to offer emergency relief and aid for reconstruction efforts. Those Governments and agencies which have come to the assistance of Mozambique must be commended, but the

enormity of the crisis demands more urgent assistance from the international community.

States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group wish to reiterate their sympathy for the Government and people of Mozambique as they face this daunting experience. It is hoped that the assistance rendered by the international community will contribute to a large extent to steering Mozambique back on to the path of economic recovery and national reconstruction.

I also wish to convey solidarity and sympathy to the Government and people of Madagascar on the recent flooding which affected their country as well.

Mr. Pal (India): Thank you, Sir, for calling this special meeting of the General Assembly to consider what the international community can do to show its solidarity with the people of Mozambique.

May I begin by conveying our deepest sympathies to the people of Mozambique. On behalf of the Government of India, Prime Minister Vajpayee has conveyed to President Chissano the heartfelt condolences of the Government and the people of India.

Through bilateral channels, we have sent 1 million rupees' worth of medicines to Mozambique as our immediate contribution to the relief efforts and will consult with the Government of Mozambique on what more we can do.

May I also convey through you, Sir, our deepest admiration for the courage and resilience which the people of Mozambique have shown, faced by this enormous disaster, and for the dedication and energy with which the Government of Mozambique has taken up the challenge of meeting the immediate needs of rescue and relief and the longer-term task of rehabilitation.

As we were reminded in the briefings which we received yesterday from representatives of the United Nations system at the very timely meeting of the Economic and Social Council organized by its President, the international community, which has responded swiftly and generously in Mozambique's hour of crisis, must stay the course. The tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction will be as daunting as those of immediate relief. The danger is that, as the floods recede, so might international attention, not least from the media. It is important that all friends of Mozambique continue to provide the support that its Government and people will need as they set about rebuilding after the disaster.

We are honoured to be a co-sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.79, submitted to this Assembly.

Mrs. Shestack (United States of America): The United States expresses its condolences for the tragedy which has befallen Mozambique and the other countries of southern Africa. The American people and the United States Government sympathize with the Mozambican people and the others as they struggle against the after-effects of the terrible floods which have swept through the area.

We have already taken urgent steps to respond to this natural disaster. The United States is proud once again to bring our resources and capacity to bear in order to be one of the countries at the forefront of the response to this emergency, as we have done in so many other instances around the world at other times.

Since the American Ambassador declared a disaster in Mozambique on 7 February, the United States has committed over $50 million to the southern African region for flood relief. Most of this has been directed to Mozambique.

The United States Agency for International Development provided to Mozambique $8 million in emergency food aid; $4 million for search and rescue, that is, 13 contract aircraft and a Miami-Dade emergency rescue team; $723,000 for emergency relief supplies, such as blankets, plastic sheeting, health supplies and water jugs; and a 25-member disaster assistance response team.

Our Coast Guard has contributed a relief coordination cell. Our Department of Defense deployed a humanitarian assistance survey team to Mozambique and South Africa on 17 February and delivered two planeloads of relief supplies. Operation Atlas Response, deployed by United States European Command on 7 March, has established a civil-military operations centre to facilitate coordination of international relief efforts. It is equipped with heavy-lift helicopters and C-130 aircraft that can send real-time video to relief coordinators in Maputo.

The United States Department of Treasury is moving to forgive the official bilateral debt owed by

Mozambique to the United States Government. This is approximately $4.9 million. The United States has also provided $25,000 of assistance each to Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, which have also been hit by flooding.

An Army Corps of Engineers team is also preparing to do damage assessments for dams in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago mentioned that there are problems with shifting landmines, which may have been dislodged by the flood waters. Our mine experts have been looking into that as well and have come to the preliminary assessment that the problem is a bit less severe than was originally thought, but we are dealing with that aspect of the problem as well.

We recognize the immensity of the destruction in Mozambique and sincerely hope that these contributions will help to alleviate some of the human suffering of the affected people. We appeal to others to demonstrate generosity in meeting the challenge of reacting to this dreadful disaster.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): I am addressing the General Assembly in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council to report on the results of the Council's historic meeting yesterday, which was dedicated to the situation in Mozambique.

As the Assembly is aware, one of the Economic and Social Council's main mandates, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations, is coordination. And perhaps one of the most important areas requiring coordination is the provision of humanitarian assistance in the face of natural disasters.

As a result of this tragic situation in Mozambique, and after consultation with the members of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, I decided to convene yesterday's unprecedented meeting so that the Council could be briefed by the Permanent Representative of Mozambique on the current situation in his country, as well as by representatives of a number of key United Nations programmes working on the ground in Mozambique.

In addition to the briefing by Mr. Carlos Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique, the Council was briefed by representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme.

The response of the Council to this initiative was most positive. Participation at the meeting was at a high level, with many Governments entering into discussion following the briefing. There was unanimous agreement on the usefulness of the briefing, and the Council subsequently authorized me to immediately transmit to the Government and the people of Mozambique a statement of support for them in their plight.

That statement will be issued as an official document of the Council, but allow me to briefly inform the General Assembly of the statement's content. Essentially, the Council expressed its profound sympathy to the Government and the people of Mozambique in view of the tragic situation resulting from the furious flood waters that have swept across the nation. The Council called upon Governments, the United Nations and its specialized agencies and bodies, the international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to continue to intensify their efforts in a coordinated manner so as to provide a continuum of relief and assistance to Mozambique, leading to the eventual reconstruction and development of the country.

To this end, the Council decided to ensure that the next humanitarian segment of its substantive session, in the year 2000, would address the issue of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian and disaster-relief assistance to Mozambique. In this way the Council will ensure that it follows up on its mandated task to oversee the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

The Economic and Social Council will remain seized of this important matter, as will, I am confident, the General Assembly.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil associates itself with the statement made earlier by Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

The Brazilian delegation would like to extend to the Government and the people of Mozambique its deepest sympathy and solidarity. Brazil is a sponsor of draft resolution A/54/L.79 and supports all efforts of the international community to provide relief to Mozambique. Our common cultural heritage and shared language are the foundation of the very close friendship between Brazil and Mozambique.

The recent floods in Mozambique have claimed a heavy toll of lives and destroyed crops and infrastructure.

Health conditions are deemed critical, and the need for clean water, medicines and shelter is urgent. The Brazilian people are following with a profound sense of solidarity the events in Mozambique, and my Government has organized an airlift of 10 tons of medicines to contribute to the relief efforts.

We are aware, however, all the efforts deployed so far still fall short of what is required to meet the needs in terms of both emergency relief and reconstruction. It is important that donor countries continue to provide assistance and mobilize the necessary funds bilaterally and through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian actors.

We wholeheartedly hope that, with the support of the international community, Mozambique will be able to overcome in a short period of time the consequences of this natural disaster of catastrophic proportions. To that end, it is essential that we maintain the momentum of international aid, from emergency relief to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our solidarity to the other countries of the region that have also been affected by the floods.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Let me first express the sincere appreciation of the European Union to the President of the General Assembly for having convened this plenary meeting of the Assembly to consider this very timely draft resolution. The tragic catastrophe in Mozambique, brought about by the unrelenting floods, is indeed an appropriate reason to meet here today.

The widespread loss of life and the extensive destruction of property and infrastructure have brought the country to a standstill and seriously risk setting back many years the social and economic development of one of the miracles of Africa. This is a reason for serious concern.

At various forums in the United Nations we debate the importance of ensuring that post-conflict periods are adequately supported by the international community so as to foster the creation and development of strong democratic institutions based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable economic development. In all these areas Mozambique has experienced enormous successes over the past decade, in part due to the commitment and hard work of its people and leaders and the support of the international community. Legislative and presidential elections were recently held, and despite difficulties these elections were unanimously considered by the international community and the United Nations to have been free and fair and to have strengthened democracy and the rule of law in the country.

It is unfortunate that these tragic floods have come to interrupt this remarkable process of transition from war to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development. But Mozambicans have proved their resilience before, and in the words of President Chissano "will rebuild again". This obstinate desire to nurture and preserve the rewards of peace has to be supported and encouraged if Mozambique is to continue to be a beacon of peace and development in the subregion. The international community must come to the rescue.

Let me recall here the words of the European Union Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner, Mr. Poul Nielson, which I already mentioned yesterday at the historic meeting of the Economic and Social Council convened by its President. Mr. Nielson said,

> "The European Union will stand together with the victims to rebuild clinics and schools, roads and bridges, as well as cleaning mines washed down by the floods. Farmers and traders will be helped to rebuild their livelihoods."

The European Union member States and the European Community have already provided very substantial help to Mozambique since the outset of this crisis, and I am pleased to say that the response on our side was very positive as well as timely. In this regard, I would mention that the European Community has announced that it will increase its development assistance to Mozambique for the year 2000 to 150 million euros. Commissioner Nielson announced last week that an additional amount of 25 million euros will be made available for emergency assistance needs.

Let me also praise the fact that United Nations agencies are fully engaged in bringing the necessary assistance to Mozambique and have already put in place the coordination mechanisms with the arrival of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team after the first floods. The presence of the Special Humanitarian Envoy for Mozambique has certainly contributed to reinforcing these coordination mechanisms. In this connection, let me emphasize the

need for a well coordinated effort between the Mozambican authorities and donors, both in the present phase of emergency relief and subsequently, to make the link between emergency aid and rehabilitation and development assistance more effective and coherent. We are following the plans under way to convene an international donors' conference to assist Mozambique in its rehabilitation and reconstruction effort with the support of the United Nations Development Programme.

It is the duty of us all not to let Mozambique down at this moment of need. That is why the European Union and its member States fully support, and have co-sponsored, the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.79. The European Union member States and the European Community are joining efforts in order to assist in guaranteeing that the gains made over the last 10 years are not washed away by rain in two months. The great efforts and sacrifices made by Mozambicans over the last few years cannot be wasted. Mozambique counts on us all.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): I thank the President for calling this meeting this morning.

I stand here to support the statement made by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the African Group.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to our brothers and sisters in Mozambique. The cruel tragedy that has befallen our neighbours is not only one of human disaster, but also of economic devastation. The extensive media coverage of the flooding disaster has provided us with a sense of the extent of the devastation that has wrecked Mozambique. But those are only glimpses of the true need that exists.

An estimated 1 million people have been left homeless, of whom 300,000 need urgent assistance. The death toll is only gradually coming to light as the water recedes in places, and it is expected to rise into the thousands. Apart from the human disaster, crops and livestock, health and education services and infrastructure have been completely wiped out. It is feared that diseases such as malaria and cholera will further compound the situation.

In response to this devastation, Member States and aid agencies have been generously providing assistance. This includes assistance from fellow developing countries, which is much appreciated. That assistance has already brought some relief to those who were worst affected by floods. Despite those efforts, the situation in Mozambique has barely begun to improve. Yesterday the rains returned to the area. Immediate assistance is still required, in addition to that which has already arrived.

Despite our also being victims of the floods, South Africa, as a concerned neighbour, is assisting Mozambique to the best of our abilities. Based on our first-hand knowledge of the situation, we should like to make the following call on the international community.

We would strongly recommend that Member States consult with the Government of Mozambique before dispatching assistance. Specific situations require specific responses, and the authorities in Mozambique are in the best position to provide guidance on what is needed on the ground.

We also believe that the current disaster relief needs to be combined with rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Without reconstruction of the infrastructure, disaster relief cannot be distributed.

Lastly, relief assistance is only an initial stopgap measure. The true economic, infrastructure and developmental needs are yet to be addressed. We call on donor communities to continue assisting in a thorough and sustained manner, and we hope that they will continue to remain seized of this matter.

This is the reason why we believe that the adoption of this draft resolution this morning will be a first step in helping Mozambique regain its livelihood again.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to call the attention of members to the sponsorship of draft resolution A/54/L.79, which was introduced earlier.

May I remind the sponsors, including those whose names were read out during the introduction, that they are invited to sign the list of sponsors maintained by the Secretariat. May I therefore request those delegations that wish to co-sponsor the draft resolution and that have not yet done so to please approach the Secretariat.

Mr. von Kaufmann (Canada): Canada joins the international community in co-sponsoring the draft resolution before the General Assembly today and in expressing its solidarity with the people of Mozambique and southern Africa in the face of this tragic natural disaster.

Canada has joined in the international effort to assist the people of Mozambique in their efforts to overcome the present challenge. In addition to the $1.625 million that Canada has already provided for immediate assistance to the victims of the flood, the Canadian Government announced Wednesday an additional $10 million for further flood relief and reconstruction efforts in Mozambique and neighbouring countries.

Canada's assistance will provide food, blankets, medicine, shelter, clean water and emergency air transport for the victims. Two Canadian Forces humanitarian aid Airbus flights are scheduled to leave soon to transport relief and reconstruction supplies, such as picks, shovels, hoes, water pumps, plastic sheeting, blankets, chlorine tablets, soap and jerrycans to assist in the relief effort. Canada has further allocated $425,000 for mine action made necessary as a result of the flooding.

The rapid and effective response of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies demonstrates once again the essential nature of the role of the United Nations in providing humanitarian assistance to people in need in crisis situations. Canada expresses its sincere appreciation for the dedication and determination of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations in responding to this emergency.

Canada expresses its hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus today to show the support of the international community for the efforts of Mozambique to respond to this disaster and for longer-term reconstruction and development.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I thank the President very much, on behalf of my delegation, for convening this meeting to consider draft resolution A/54/L.79, on the disaster in Mozambique. As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, my delegation supports it, and I wish to associate my delegation with the statement made by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the African Group.

Before I proceed further, let me reiterate, on behalf of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, and on my own behalf, our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Mozambique in this, their hour of need.

What befell Mozambique can happen to any country; in fact, it has happened to some other countries. In this regard, my delegation is grateful to the international community and the United Nations and its agencies for the rapidity of the response to this humanitarian catastrophe.

We are still in the first phase of dealing with this disaster. We must now begin to think about the next phase, which is the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase. We urge the international community and the United Nations system to begin to put in place mechanisms for meeting the challenges of the next phase. Resources should be provided to meet those challenges.

Yesterday, in the Economic and Social Council meeting on this problem, the representative of Namibia proposed the inclusion in this draft resolution of a paragraph on the matter of cancelling all bilateral loans, whether commercial or otherwise, to Mozambique. We thought that a paragraph reflecting that proposal would have been included in the draft resolution. However, such a paragraph has not been included. Notwithstanding that fact, my delegation still supports the spirit and intent of this draft resolution. We understand that some countries have already begun to cancel the commercial bilateral debts of Mozambique. We welcome those initiatives.

Mr. Osio (Nigeria): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, we commend the initiative to convene this meeting to discuss the tragic situation in Mozambique, which resulted from the unprecedented floods that have been unleashed on that country and some of its neighbours since February. We should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Mozambique for his briefings to date, which have been very informative. Through him, the Group of 77 and China has conveyed its deep sympathy to the Government and people of Mozambique for the sad loss of hundreds of lives and the massive destruction of property, sources of livelihood and infrastructure. This is indeed a trying moment for a country that has only recently been recovering from the ravages of a civil war and that had been registering modest economic growth, which the tragic floods have now set back.

Natural disasters such as this flooding are phenomena about which no nation has a choice, and only a few, if any, have the national means to cope with the disastrous effects on their own, without outside assistance. This fact underscores the commonality of humanity and the interdependence of mankind, which our

Organization has always sought to uphold and promote. It is in this light that the Group of 77 and China welcomes the efforts of the Government of Mozambique and its appeal for international humanitarian assistance. We are heartened that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have supported that appeal so well that the international response is now in continuous flow. We urge the international donor community not to stop that flow of international economic assistance to Mozambique.

We have found in the engagement on this issue a commonality of purpose. Not only has the Security Council been engaged with this issue, but the Economic and Social Council itself, with its advantageous role in coordinating humanitarian assistance, has also deliberated on this issue, and has proposed to take it up during its substantive session this year.

Now, we are no less heartened that the General Assembly has seen fit to come up with a deliberative exercise that will go to the root cause and provide assistance and benefits, not only in the immediate future and the short term, but in the long term, to the people of Mozambique. It is in this light that we call for the adoption of draft resolution A/54/L.79.

While I have the floor, I would like to add that the Group of 77 and China likewise extends its sympathy and solidarity to the Government and people of Madagascar over a similar calamity, which was brought about by cyclone Gloria.

Humanity is one. We send our sincere condolences to all the countries that are affected.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.79, entitled "Assistance to Mozambique following the devastating floods".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce the updated list of countries that have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.79 since its introduction: Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.79?

Draft resolution A/54/L.79 was adopted (resolution 54/96 L).

The President: I call on the representative of Mozambique.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Sir, for having convened this meeting and for including the consideration of the draft resolution on assistance to Mozambique following the devastating floods, under agenda item 20 (b), "Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions".

I wish to express the gratitude of my delegation to the Permanent Representative of Egypt for his statement and for having introduced the draft resolution to the Assembly on behalf of the African Group.

Mozambique is going through an unprecedented tragedy. Torrential rain, both in Mozambique and in neighbouring countries, and cyclone Eline produced severe floods in the central and southern parts of the country that resulted in the tragic loss of human lives and extensive destruction of property. The floods left more than 900 people dead and 900,000 directly affected and in desperate need of urgent emergency relief, while 2 million have been otherwise affected by the floods, also needing shelter, food, clean water and health care.

The floods have had a very negative socio-economic impact that includes the destruction of roads and bridges; the disruption of rail tracks; extensive damage to the water supply system, power lines, schools, health

centres, hospitals, wells and sewage systems; and the loss of cattle and more than 100,000 hectares of food and cash crops. This will lead to food security problems and loss of income. To add to this gloomy picture, we have witnessed the outbreak of water-borne diseases, particularly cholera and malaria, exposing the affected populations to another serious threat.

Another area of concern is the danger of landmines, as the floods have shifted and exposed these deadly weapons, which pose a serious threat to the population and will definitely undermine resettlement programmes, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

The Government of Mozambique has taken the necessary measures to address this unfolding tragedy. A nationwide campaign of solidarity with the flood victims was launched with the aim of collecting donations in cash, food, clothes and other essential material goods. The Government also dispatched senior cabinet ministers to the affected areas to assess the extent of the damage and oversee the relief operations. The National Institute for Disaster Management was placed under the leadership of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to give the necessary political direction and guidance, as well as facilitating and speeding up the decision-making process.

At the operative level, the Government benefitted from the precious and generous help of neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa, in conducting the first relief operations to save lives and alleviate the suffering of the victims.

With an initial assessment of 150,000 people affected, on 10 February this year the Government launched its first international emergency appeal for humanitarian assistance, amounting to $2.7 million, to mitigate the devastating effects of the floods. As the flooding worsened as cyclone Eline ravaged Mozambique and the neighbouring countries, on 23 February the Government of Mozambique launched its second international emergency appeal for $65 million, based on an initial number of 300,000 affected people.

The extent of the devastation by the floods, both in Mozambique and in the neighbouring countries, led to a ministerial meeting in Pretoria on 3 March of the four most severely hit countries in southern Africa — Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe — to seek a regional response to the disaster. At this meeting, these countries committed themselves to continuing to promote coordination and cooperation in addressing the current and future disasters, decided to develop a regional action plan in response to the disaster and strongly recommended the possibility of setting up a disaster management unit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The disaster we are facing in Mozambique is unquestionably having an overwhelming negative impact on the economic, social and humanitarian situation of the country that needs to be addressed, as it is undermining the remarkable socio-economic progress achieved during the last five years.

In addressing the effects of the floods, a pragmatic and comprehensive approach is necessary. This approach should include emergency rescue operations and identification of basic needs; stabilization of the conditions of the rescued populations; resettlement of displaced populations and emergency rehabilitation of essential infrastructures; and recovery and long-term reconstruction.

As emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of key infrastructures are pursued with a view to ensuring the resettlement of the displaced people and the ultimate resumption of normal life, the question of landmines requires special attention. Therefore, there will be a need for flood-related mine action that will include mine awareness, mine surveys and mine clearance. To this end, the Government of Mozambique counts on the valuable support of the United Nations Mine Action Service, funds and programmes and the international community at large.

In its efforts to deal effectively with this catastrophe, the Government of Mozambique has benefited from the generous and substantial assistance of the international community. We have received from all corners of the world messages of sympathy and solidarity, as well as aid and assistance. At this juncture, allow me, on behalf of the people and the Government of Mozambique, to express our sincere gratitude to the world for this outstanding support.

The international assistance rendered to us so far has played an instrumental role in the emergency relief efforts, by bringing much-needed help to those who have lost almost all their belongings and are now facing serious nutritional, hygiene and health problems. We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our most sincere appreciation to those creditor nations that have partially or completely cancelled the external debt owed by Mozambique.

We are confident that with determination and support from our partners, and the readiness of the international community to promptly respond to the appeals for emergency aid and assistance, the country will overcome the crisis and move towards normalizing the lives of the flood victims.

In order to bring about a sustainable resettlement, speedy recovery process and the normalization of the lives of the affected people, we need to combine humanitarian assistance with medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. This will be possible only with adequate, timely and steady assistance from the international community. The draft resolution presented by the Chairman of the African Group this morning seeks to provide the appropriate framework for immediate, medium-term and long-term action by the international community in support of the Mozambican Government's efforts.

The emergency relief programmes being undertaken in Mozambique are based on effective coordination among the Government, the donor community, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

For the resettlement of displaced people and the recovery, long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction of key elements of the infrastructure, a joint technical team has been formed to prepare a report to be presented at the international donor conference to assist Mozambique in its rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Government of Mozambique welcomes the holding of such a vital conference and hopes that adequate pledges will be made during it.

We commend the important role played by the United Nations through its funds and specialized agencies, namely the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, among others. The leadership that has been provided by the Secretary-General from the beginning of the process is highly appreciated by my Government. The appointment of Mr. Ross Mountain has been instrumental in improving the much-needed coordination and the mobilization of additional resources.

We are equally touched by the expressions of sympathy, solidarity and support from the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General. We also wish to express our appreciation to the President of the Economic and Social Council and all Council members for the unprecedented meeting held yesterday to discuss the situation in Mozambique.

We would also like to encourage the United Nations system to continue to play its leading role in the mobilization and coordination of international assistance to Mozambique, particularly in preparing and organizing the international donor conference.

Once again, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and all the Member States that have sponsored and supported the adoption of the draft resolution on assistance to Mozambique, and that have expressed solidarity and offered assistance.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): In view of the devastation the natural disaster has inflicted on Mozambique, let me extend to the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Madagascar, our sincere and sorrowful condolences. We also extend our best wishes to the courageous people of Mozambique.

The delegation of Madagascar welcomes the adoption of the resolution on Mozambique, which Madagascar co-sponsored.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to take this opportunity to express to the Acting President our sincere gratitude for the sympathy he showed to my country, which is currently suffering the ravages of the natural disaster, which have been aggravated by various epidemics.

I hope that the appeal that the Acting President made earlier will lead to a positive response. I would also like to thank the entire international community, through the representatives of the various countries, regions and groups who today have expressed their sympathy regarding my country. These were the representatives of Egypt, Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, India, the United States of America, Indonesia, Brazil, Portugal, South Africa, Canada, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

Mr. Osio (Nigeria): Concerning our deliberations on the resolution that has just been adopted, we want to have it on record that the following slight amendment would have been added to the text. After the last preambular paragraph, would have been added:

"Taking note further of the Economic and Social Council presidential statement on the floods in Mozambique".

This is just for the record.

The Acting President: The observation by the representative of Nigeria has been taken note of.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.92

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 14 March 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/54/L.80)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.80.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the African Group, under agenda item 20 (b), the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.80, entitled "Assistance to Madagascar following the tropical cyclones".

The draft resolution contains six preambular and seven operative paragraphs. In the preambular section of the draft resolution, the General Assembly expresses its grave concern at the extensive damage and the devastation caused by the tropical cyclones Eline and Gloria and the floods which have struck Madagascar. It also notes with concern that these natural disasters have been aggravated by various epidemics which have resulted in the loss of human lives. Furthermore, while recognizing the efforts of the Government and people of Madagascar to provide relief and emergency assistance to the victims of these disasters, the General Assembly expresses its awareness that, to mitigate the consequences of this disaster, international assistance is required, both for emergency relief and for rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure.

In the operative section of the draft resolution, the General Assembly expresses its solidarity with the Government and people of Madagascar and notes with satisfaction the efforts of the Government and people of Madagascar to provide rapid relief to the victims through their own means. The General Assembly also expresses its gratitude to the international community, including organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, for the measures it has taken to support the efforts of the Government of Madagascar to carry out relief operations and provide emergency assistance and requests States and international organizations to provide additional emergency support to Madagascar with a view to alleviating the economic and financial burden which the people of Madagascar will have to bear. Finally, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to make all necessary arrangements to continue mobilizing and coordinating humanitarian assistance from the specialized agencies and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system with a view to supporting the efforts of the Government of Madagascar.

00-34292 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I wish at this point to draw members' attention to a minor revision to operative paragraph 7. That paragraph would now read as follows:

> "*Requests* the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-fifth session under the item on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance, through the Economic and Social Council at the next humanitarian segment of its substantive session in 2000 on the implementation of this resolution."

The exact magnitude of the disaster that has befallen Madagascar has yet to be seen. The two recent cyclones have caused severe damage, both to Madagascar's infrastructure and to its agricultural capacity. It is estimated that over 10,000 people have been left homeless by the floods and that more 170 have already lost their lives. The Government of Madagascar has estimated that 560,000 persons have been affected by the damage resulting from the cyclones and has launched an emergency aid appeal for $3.7 million for those who have been affected.

I would like, on behalf of the African Group, to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts of the international community, States and organizations alike, to assist Madagascar in its hour of need and urge it to continue to provide emergency assistance to mitigate the severe damage that has resulted from the recent cyclones and to respond generously to the appeal launched by the Government of Madagascar in this regard.

It is therefore our fervent hope that the General Assembly will support the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.80.

In this connection, I have the honour to announce that the draft resolution has been co-sponsored by the following member States: Algeria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Mr. Brito (Portugal): The General Assembly is meeting once again, just a few days after it convened to hear about the dramatic situation in Mozambique resulting from the unrelenting floods, to consider yet another draft resolution, on the dire situation caused by the two recent cyclones that struck Madagascar.

The European Union would like to present its condolences to the Government and the people of Madagascar for the loss of life caused by these two disasters, which hit that country in quick succession last month and at the beginning of March. The situation is compounded by the fact that the disaster occurred at a time when an epidemic of cholera had already claimed the lives of over 1,000 people.

According to the available reports, thousands of people have been forced out of their homes by the cyclones, and more information is now starting to emerge on the number of other people who have also, to varying degrees, been affected by these natural disasters.

We understand that severe agricultural damage may also have been sustained in some areas, and that houses and infrastructure in the path of the storms were destroyed. Moreover, the destruction of roads and railroads is hampering the movement of food and other commodities, delaying the arrival of much-needed assistance to affected populations.

The European Union and its member States would like to commend the United Nations agencies already active on the island for their efforts in bringing assistance to the populations cut off by the floods, as well as the active participation in these efforts of other organizations, including non-governmental organizations, which have rushed to the areas hit by the disaster and are now coordinating their activities with the Government of Madagascar in order to ensure that the assistance they are providing is as effective and swift as possible.

We understand that assessment missions are already under way or are being planned, including a mission by the European Community Humanitarian Office. The full picture of the disaster will be clear only later on. The European Union is waiting for the appeal to the international community, which will be launched soon, before further deciding on future assistance to Madagascar.

The European Union attaches great importance to the humanitarian work of the United Nations, as attested to by its close involvement with and participation in the various consultation processes in this area. The European

Union stands ready to contribute constructively to the development of our common and consensual position in the humanitarian area. However, we wish to point out that this would be greatly facilitated if we were offered the opportunity of being involved at an early stage in the work on all draft resolutions.

The European Union is hopeful that this draft resolution will contribute to the efforts of the international community to alleviate the plight of the people of Madagascar.

Mr. Osio (Nigeria): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Nigeria would like to convey its appreciation for the convening of this meeting on yet another sad occasion, in connection with the cyclone that struck Madagascar, a developing State Member of this Organization. Not very long ago, we gathered to express our solidarity with Mozambique.

Natural disasters continue to take their toll. Humanity is ever united, even in the face of this tragedy. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the international response, which Madagascar so direly needs at this time of tragedy. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, we pledge the commitment of every member of the Group to work towards a concerted universal solution to this problem, even a solution that would include avoiding a recurrence in the near future.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.80, entitled "Assistance to Madagascar following the tropical cyclones", as orally revised.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.80: Andorra, Benin, Bolivia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Guatemala, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Malta, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Qatar, San Marino, Solomon Islands, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.80, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/54/L.80, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 54/96 M).

Mr. Morel (Seychelles): Seychelles is also a sponsor of the draft resolution. We did what was necessary before the meeting was convened. I would like to confirm that fact, and ensure that we are represented in the records.

The Acting President: We take note of the statement of the representative of Seychelles.

I call on the representative of Madagascar.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank the President very warmly, on behalf of the delegation of Madagascar, for having convened this meeting to adopt resolution 54/96 M, regarding assistance to Madagascar, which was struck by the tropical cyclones Eline and Gloria.

The adoption by consensus of this resolution shows that the entire international community is deeply concerned by the critical situation of developing countries that fall prey to natural disasters. This decision bears witness once again to the international solidarity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Government of Madagascar is particularly grateful to the members of the Assembly for this display of sympathy and solidarity.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude to Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the African Group for this month, kindly introduced the draft resolution. My delegation is also very touched by the gesture made by all the delegations that sponsored the resolution. We are also very grateful to the delegations that by their statements showed their support for and sympathy with the people and the Government of Madagascar. Those delegations were Portugal, speaking on behalf of the European Union, and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the very warm thanks and deep gratitude of the Government of the Republic of Madagascar to the States, international, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and associations that have, since the beginning of the calamities, assisted Madagascar in this difficult time. Nor can we overlook, in this regard, the diligent and effective work that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has done at Headquarters in New York, in Geneva and in the field. We also greatly appreciate the efforts of the Resident Coordinator. Lastly, I would like to once again reiterate our thanks to the Secretary-General for the appeal for

support to Madagascar that he launched in the wake of the tropical cyclones.

Following the example of others committed to the rebirth of Africa, the Government of Madagascar during this last decade increased its efforts to emerge from economic stagnation and to place the country solidly on the path of sustainable development. With this objective, difficult and often painful measures were taken to increase the productive potential of the Malagasy economy. These efforts are unfortunately now being hindered by the all-too-frequent occurrence — it is almost yearly — of cyclones, which very rapidly wipe out previous significant development progress. These cyclones put the country's food security at risk and also severely affect the national infrastructure and the resources on which the Madagascar economy essentially depends. This year, Madagascar was once again hit in a very short space of time by two cyclones that took a toll of many victims and caused a great deal of material damage.

The preliminary figures are that 25 per cent of the health-services infrastructure in the affected areas was destroyed and that 560,000 people have suffered losses. In addition to the cyclones, which affect human and natural resources, other natural disasters — such as locust invasions in 1997, 1998 and 1999, drought and marine erosion — have undermined the development prospects of Madagascar.

My country's Government undertook the necessary measures to tackle the emergency situation. But given the scope of the damage and the precariousness of the economy, Madagascar is not in a position to meet the needs of the victims on its own. These needs have been estimated to amount to $3,681,361. This is the provisional estimate in the latest report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

We are confident that in response to the appeal contained in the resolution that has just been adopted, a great number of international actors will participate or continue to participate significantly in the emergency rescue and assistance efforts.

However, we should not overlook the fact that, notwithstanding the magnitude of emergency assistance provided in cases of natural disasters — which focuses on reducing somewhat people's immediate problems — this type of action has its inherent limits. Once the crisis is over, the whole problem of rehabilitation remains. This is why the Government of Madagascar would like to draw the attention of the international community to the economic and financial difficulties that my country will face in its reconstruction effort, which must be carried out under particularly unfavourable conditions. At the appropriate time my delegation will take the opportunity to raise these issues with the appropriate bodies of our Organization.

Two very important aspects of the problem are worth raising already. First, rehabilitating equipment and infrastructure will require increasing public expenditure beyond sustainable levels, and a significant part of the resources that had been earmarked for development projects will have to be diverted. Secondly, the national economic-growth prospects will be seriously undermined by the drop in production resulting from the damage done to the agricultural, transportation, communications and energy sectors, and the loss of exports will worsen the balance of payments.

In view of these difficulties, we express the hope that the international community will consider favourably and with understanding the extent to which it could participate in the rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. This hope is justified by our belief that the present and future steps undertaken by my Government will receive the full attention of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.93

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

93rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 15 March 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Allocation of items and organization of work

The Acting President: I should now like to recall for representatives that agenda item 110 entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women" was allocated to the Third Committee. In order for the Assembly to proceed expeditiously on this item, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider agenda item 110 directly in plenary meetings?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 110? I see no objection. We shall therefore proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 110 (*continued*)

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Draft decisions (A/54/L.77 and A/54/L.78)

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decisions A/54/L.77 and A/54/L.78.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft decision A/54/L.77, entitled "Arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century'".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/54/L.77?

Draft decision A/54/L.77 was adopted.

The Acting President: The Assembly will next take a decision on draft decision A/54/L.78, entitled "Arrangements regarding accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century'".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/54/L.78?

Draft decision A/54/L.78 was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 110.

00-34528 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Agenda item 49

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

(b) The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Draft resolution (A/54/L.81/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I should now like to draw the Assembly's attention to some revisions I made to the text of the draft resolution which was contained in document A/54/L.81.

With regard to paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, following consultations I had with member States after sending the Assembly the draft dated 13 March 2000, I have made a slight revision to the title of the overall theme of the Summit, which now reads "The role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". This does not imply any prejudice against any other operative paragraphs.

With regard to paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the original text did not reflect properly one of the provisions of Article 21 of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, that the General Assembly shall elect a President, not a country, for each session. Consequently, I have replaced twice in paragraph 3 the words "the country holding the presidency" by the words "the country of the President".

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.81/Rev.1.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs): By operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/54/L.81/Rev.1, the General Assembly would decide that the Millennium Summit should be held from 6 to 8 September 2000 in New York. In connection with conference servicing requirements, the servicing of the plenary meetings would be part of the normal servicing of the sessions of the Assembly. No additional requirements would thus arise in this respect.

By operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide that the Millennium Summit would be composed of plenary meetings and of four interactive round-table sessions, with each interactive session to be held in concurrence with a plenary meeting. On the basis of this decision, the related estimated costs for security and protocol requirements would amount to $450,000 and $193,000, respectively. The related provisions would be reflected in the context of the first performance report on the programme budget for 2000-2001 to be presented to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Consequently, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/54/L.81/Rev.1, any additional requirements which would arise would be considered in the context of the first performance report for the biennium 2000-2001 at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: As provided for in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, all outstanding issues, including this matter, will be considered at an appropriate moment by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.81/Rev.1, entitled "Millennium Summit of the United Nations".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.81/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/54/L.81/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 54/254).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 49.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.

United Nations

A/54/PV.94

General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

94th plenary meeting
Monday, 3 April 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 49 *(continued)*

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

(b) The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/2000)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I have the honour to present my millennium report.

The millennium might have been no more than an accident of the calendar, but you — the Governments and the peoples of the world — have chosen to make it more than that: an occasion for all humanity to celebrate and to reflect. The world did celebrate on New Year's Eve, in one time zone after another. And you, the General Assembly, have provided a unique opportunity for us all to reflect on our common destiny by convening what will surely be the largest gathering of political leaders the world has ever seen.

The object of my report is to provide that gathering with a basic document to work from. In it I have attempted to identify the main challenges that we face as we enter the twenty-first century and to sketch out an action plan for addressing them.

If one word encapsulates the changes we are living through, it is "globalization". We live in a world that is interconnected as never before; one in which groups and individuals interact more and more directly across State frontiers, often without involving the State at all. This has its dangers, of course. Crime, narcotics, terrorism, disease, weapons — all these move back and forth faster and in greater numbers than in the past. People feel threatened by events far away.

But the benefits of globalization are obvious, too: faster growth, higher living standards and new opportunities, not only for individuals but also for better understanding between nations, and for common action.

One problem is that, at present, these opportunities are far from being equally distributed. How can we say that half of the human race — which has yet to make or receive a phone call, let alone use a computer — is taking part in globalization? We cannot, without insulting their poverty.

A second problem is that, even where the global market does reach, it is not yet underpinned, as national markets are, by rules based on shared social objectives. In the absence of such rules, globalization makes many people feel that they are at the mercy of unpredictable forces. The overarching challenge of our times,

0037490 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

therefore, is to make globalization mean more than bigger markets. To make a success of this great upheaval, we must learn how to govern better and, above all, how to govern better together.

We need to make our States stronger and more effective at the national level, and we need to get them working together on global issues, all pulling their weight and all having their say.

What are these global issues? I have grouped them under three headings, each of which relates to a fundamental human freedom: freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to sustain their lives on this planet.

First, I shall refer to freedom from want. How can we call human beings free and equal in dignity when over 1 billion of them are struggling to survive on less than $1 a day, without safe drinking water, and when half of all humanity lacks adequate sanitation? Some of us are worrying about whether the stock market will crash, or struggling to master our latest computer, while more than half of our fellow men and women have much more basic worries, such as where their children's next meal is coming from.

Unless we redouble and concert our efforts, poverty and inequality will get worse still, since world population will grow by a further 2 billion in the next quarter-century, with almost all the increase in the poorest countries.

Many of these problems are at their worst in sub-Saharan Africa, where extreme poverty affects a higher proportion of the population than anywhere else and is compounded by a higher incidence of conflict, HIV/AIDS and other ills. I am asking the world community to make special provision for Africa's needs and to give full support to Africans in their struggle to overcome these problems. My report sets a series of targets for reversing these frightening trends throughout the world.

I believe that, within the next 15 years, we can halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty; ensure that all children — girls and boys alike, but particularly girls — receive a full primary education; and halt the spread of HIV/AIDS. Within 20 years, we can also transform the lives of 100 million slum dwellers around the world. I believe we should be able to offer all young people between the ages of 15 and 24 the chance of decent work.

These targets are realistic, if we take full advantage of the opportunities offered by globalization and the revolution in information technology. Much depends on developing countries themselves adopting the right policies, but the industrialized world, too, has a vital part to play. It must fully open its markets to products from developing countries; it must provide faster and deeper debt relief; and it must give more, and better focused, development assistance.

Needless to say, the role of the private sector is also crucial. It is vital that we form new partnerships to make the most of the new technology. I am announcing several new examples in my report. One is a network of 10,000 on-line sites to provide hospitals and clinics in developing countries with the up-to-date health information and resources they need. Another is a consortium of high-tech volunteer groups from industrialized countries to train people in developing countries in the uses and opportunities of information technology. A third is an initiative, led by one of the biggest international telecommunications groups, to provide round-the-clock communications in areas that have been struck by natural disasters, when instant information can save the lives of thousands of people.

The second main heading in the report is freedom from fear. Wars between States are, mercifully, less frequent than they used to be. But in the last decade, internal wars have claimed more than 5 million lives and driven many times that number of people from their homes. Moreover, we still live under the shadow of weapons of mass destruction. I believe that both of these threats require us to think of security less in terms of merely defending territory and more in terms of protecting people. That means that we must tackle the threat of deadly conflict at every stage of the process.

We must do more to prevent conflicts from happening at all. Most conflicts happen in poor countries, especially those which are badly governed or in which power and wealth are very unfairly distributed between ethnic or religious groups. So the best way to prevent conflict is to promote political arrangements in which all groups are fairly represented, combined with human rights, minority rights and broad-based economic development.

Also, illicit transfers of weapons, money or natural resources must be forced into the limelight so that we can control them better. We must protect vulnerable people by finding better ways to enforce humanitarian and

human rights law and to ensure that gross violations do not go unpunished. National sovereignty offers vital protection to small and weak States, but it should not be a shield for crimes against humanity. In extreme cases, the clash of these two principles confronts us with a real dilemma, and the Security Council may have a moral duty to act on behalf of the international community.

In most cases, however, the international community should be able to preserve peace by measures which do not infringe State sovereignty. It can do so if our capacity to conduct peace operations is strengthened. On this point, the Millennium Summit will receive separate recommendations from a high-level panel that I have established to study the issue.

Economic sanctions are one weapon available to the Security Council, of which it made extensive use during the 1990s. But too often, these sanctions fail to impress delinquent rulers, while causing much unnecessary suffering to innocent people. We must target them better.

Finally, we must pursue our disarmament agenda more vigorously. Since 1995, it has lost momentum in an alarming way. That means not only controlling the traffic in small arms much more tightly, but also returning to the vexed issue of nuclear weapons. This month's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is likely to be a depressing affair unless there are clear signals that all parties, including the nuclear-weapon States, are ready for a real effort. I am suggesting that a broader-based international conference, to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers of all kinds, should now be seriously considered.

The third fundamental freedom my report addresses is the one that is not clearly identified in the Charter, because in 1945 our founders could scarcely imagine that it would ever be threatened. I mean the freedom of future generations to sustain their lives on this planet.

Even now, many of us have not understood how seriously that freedom is threatened. I am told that in all the Assembly's deliberations and in all its preparatory work for the Millennium Assembly over the past 18 months, the environment was never seriously considered. And in preparing this report I found many fewer policy prescriptions ready to be put into practice than I did in the other areas I have mentioned.

Yet the facts set out in that section are deeply troubling. I beseech members to read it with at least as much attention as the rest of the report. If I could sum it up in one sentence, I should say that we are plundering our children's heritage to pay for our present unsustainable practices. This must stop. We must reduce emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases, to put a stop to global warming. Implementing the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is a vital first step.

The "green revolution", which brought dramatic increases in agricultural productivity in the 1970s and 1980s, has slowed down. We need to follow it with a "blue revolution" focused on increasing productivity per unit of water and on managing our watersheds and flood plains more carefully. We must face the implications of a steadily shrinking surface of cultivable land, at a time when every year brings many millions of new mouths to feed. Biotechnology may offer the best hope, but only if we can resolve the controversies and allay the fears surrounding it. I am convening a global policy network to consider these issues urgently, so that the poor and the hungry do not lose out.

We must preserve our forests and fisheries and the diversity of living species, all of which are close to collapsing under the pressure of human consumption and destruction. In short, we need a new ethic of stewardship. We need a much better informed public, and we need to take environmental costs and benefits fully into account in our economic and other policy decisions. We need regulations and incentives to discourage pollution and over-consumption of non-renewable resources, and to encourage environment-friendly practices. And we need more accurate scientific data.

Above all, we need to remember the old African wisdom which I learned as a child: that the earth is not ours; it is a treasure we hold in trust for our descendants.

But members may be asking by now, What about the United Nations? Is not the theme of the Summit, and of the report, the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century? Yes, it is, and the report contains a further section on renewing the United Nations, which I hope Member States will take very seriously.

But let us not forget why the United Nations matters. It matters only to the extent that it can make a useful contribution to solving the problems and accomplishing the tasks I have just outlined. Those are

the problems and the tasks which affect the everyday lives of our peoples. It is on how we handle them that the utility of the United Nations will be judged. If we lose sight of that point, the United Nations will have little or no role to play in the twenty-first century.

Let us never forget that our Organization was founded in the name of "We, the peoples", the words I have chosen as the title of my report. We are at the service of the world's peoples, and we must listen to them. They are telling us that past achievements are not enough; they are telling us that we must do more — and do it better.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Secretary-General for the introduction of his substantive, eloquent, historic and thought-provoking report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.95

General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

95th plenary meeting
Friday, 7 April 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 125 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/730/Add.4)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/54/730/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/54/730 and addenda 1 to 3, Equatorial Guinea has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 17 (f), 118, 118 and 164, 119, 120, 121, 124, 125, 127, 151 (a), 164, 169, 173 and 175.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Jan Piotr Jaremczuk of Poland, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Jaremczuk (Poland), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I deem it a great honour to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on its work done during the first part of the resumed fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

In connection with sub-item (f), entitled "Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee", of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/54/545/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of Mr. Victor V. Vislykh of the Russian Federation for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2000. The Committee recommended the appointment of Mr. Vislykh by acclamation.

Concerning agenda item 118, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/511/Add.2. In paragraph 17 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft resolutions dealing with, respectively, the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, outsourcing practices of the United Nations and the reports of the Office of Internal

00-38279 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Oversight Services. In paragraph 18, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions — entitled "Procurement reform: definition of exigency needs" and "Strengthening of external oversight mechanisms" — and one draft decision proposed by the Chairman of the Committee, entitled "Improving the working methods of the Fifth Committee". The Committee adopted the three draft decisions and the three draft resolutions without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 119, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", on the question of the Integrated Management Information System, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/508/Add.2. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 120, entitled "Programme planning", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/676/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions. Draft decision I deals mainly with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. Draft decision II deals with the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Both decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 121, entitled "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/691/Add.1. In paragraph 9 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 124, entitled "Pattern of conferences", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/690/Add.1. In paragraph 7 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 125, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/685/Add.1. In paragraph 9 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which, as orally revised and amended, was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 127, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/829. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of an oral draft decision deferring consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 151 (a), entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", in particular the question of death and disability benefits, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/684/Add.1. In paragraph 4 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of an oral draft decision proposed by the Chairman of the Committee. The oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 164, entitled "Human resources management", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/680/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of an oral draft decision deferring consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning the question of gratis personnel provided by Governments, under agenda item 118, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", and agenda item 64, "Human resources management", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/827. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of an oral draft decision deferring consideration of this question to the second part of its the fifty-fourth session. The draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Also under these two agenda items, the Committee considered the question of the proposed regulations governing the status, basic rights and duties of the Secretary-General and officials other than Secretariat officials and experts on mission. The report of the Committee on this issue is contained in document

A/54/828. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the deferral of this question to its fifty-fifth session. The oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 169, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/505/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 173, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/687/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, regarding agenda item 175, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/54/830. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(f) Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/545/Add.1)

The Acting President: In paragraph 5 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Victor V. Vislykh of the Russian Federation as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on 7 April 2000 and ending on 31 December 2000.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints that person?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/511/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 17 of its report and on the three draft decisions recommended in paragraph 18 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit". Draft resolution I was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 54/255).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Outsourcing practices in the United Nations". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 54/256).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 54/257).

The Acting President: We shall now turn to the three draft decisions recommended in paragraph 18 of the report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/511/Add.2).

Draft decision I is entitled "Procurement reform: definition of exigency needs". Draft decision I was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly likewise wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision II is entitled "Strengthening of external oversight mechanisms". The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision III is entitled "Improving the working methods of the Fifth Committee". The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision III. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda items 118 (*continued*) **and 164** (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/827)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/828)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in document A/54/827 and on the draft decision recommended in document A/54/828.

The Assembly will first take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report contained in document A/54/827. The draft decision, entitled "Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/54/828. The draft decision, entitled "Proposed regulations governing the status, basic rights and duties of officials other than Secretariat officials and experts on mission", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly also wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 118 and 164.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/508/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft

decision, entitled "Integrated Management Information System", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 119.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Programme planning

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/676/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

Draft decision I, entitled "Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision II, entitled "Programme planning", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly likewise wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/691/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report and on two draft decisions recommended in paragraph 10 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution entitled "Review of the resource requirements for the High-Level Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/258).

The Acting President: We now turn to draft decision I, entitled "Asbestos problem at the United Nations Headquarters building".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Estimates pertaining to matters of which the Security Council is seized", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/690/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "United Nations publications: enhancing cost-effectiveness in implementing legislative mandates", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/259).

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/685/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/237 D).

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hays (United States of America): It is my pleasure to address the General Assembly today on what many of us recognize to be a critical issue before the membership, something that, if properly structured, will ensure the future viability of this institution: the assessment scale. Over the past several months, our delegation has had the benefit of thoughtful engagement by many Member States on this issue. These discussions have been fruitful. We are especially encouraged by the resolution of the General Assembly to send new reform proposals to the Committee on Contributions for its consideration. Working together, I believe that we can ensure meaningful, comprehensive and long-awaited change, which will equip this Organization to face the new challenges of the new millennium.

It is clear that we all benefit from this enhanced dialogue and sense of openness. My delegation has sensed a growing recognition that this institution requires a renewed involvement on the part of Member States if the United Nations is to undertake the daunting tasks that we all demand of it. One way in which we can contribute to this effort is to join together in a reform effort that draws us closer to the original ideals of the institution, a reform that is inspired by inclusiveness rather than exclusivity.

The United States delegation believes strongly that this process is taking shape, but it will need a sustained commitment by all of us in order to ensure success. My delegation intends to work with all of our colleagues to promote clarity, engagement and equity in the reform agenda. To that end, we are very pleased with the response to our delegation's speech in the Fifth Committee at its resumed session calling for a review of the peacekeeping scale and a reform of peacekeeping activities in general. The United States delegation will continue its dialogue on this subject and hopes to join with like-minded nations in calling for a full-scale review of the peacekeeping scale and proposals aimed at improving United Nations peacekeeping capabilities.

My delegation hopes that peacekeeping reform will guide the Fifth Committee's agenda in the month of May and that it will receive the same attention, cooperation and thoughtful concern enjoyed in regular budget discussions. As Ambassador Holbrooke recently stated in the Fifth Committee, peacekeeping is the core task for which the United Nations was formed and the one by which it will ultimately be judged. If we are to be judged kindly by future generations, we must resolve the financial and operational problems facing peacekeeping today.

I thank Member States for their continued cooperation and contributions to this end on behalf of my delegation and on behalf of those in every corner of the world that depend on our best efforts.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 127

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/829)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 127.

Agenda item 151 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/684/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Death and disability benefits", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 151.

Agenda item 164 (*continued*)

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/680/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 164.

Agenda item 169 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/505/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/20 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 169.

Agenda item 173 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/687/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/246 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded our this stage of our consideration of agenda item 173.

Agenda item 175

Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/830)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/260).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 175.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.